

COUNTY NAME: SAN LUIS OBISPO

CalWORKs County Plan Addendum

Date Submitted to California Department of Social Services:
December 21st, 2006

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I hereby certify that County Board of Supervisors was briefed regarding the contents of this Plan addendum prior to submittal.



County Welfare Director's
Signature

Lee Collins
Printed Name

12-21-06

Briefing Date

1) County Goals

After reviewing the county's existing CalWORKs County Plan, please provide a general description of how the county will meet the goals defined in Welfare and Institutions (W&I) Code Section 10540, while taking into consideration the work participation requirements of the federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

The goals of W&I Code Section 10540 are the following:

- 1) Reduce child poverty in the State;
- 2) Reduce dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; reduce out-of-wedlock births; and encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families;
- 3) Meet the requirements of federal law while avoiding unanticipated outcomes that negatively affect child well being, the demand for county general assistance, or the number of families affected by domestic violence.

A. General description of how the county will meet the goals of W&I Code 10540

We plan to meet these goals by collaborating with community partners and families and focusing on enhancing families' self-sufficiency. To that end, the county will continue to develop relationships with families to assess their needs and goals, help them access family prevention services when appropriate, offer opportunities for skill-building, and offer support services for job retention and wage progression.

The county has a policy for the Diversion program that is based on the principles of Best Practice: safety of children, stability of families, and promotion of self-sufficiency. All applicants are evaluated for Diversion, since we recognize that Diversion can help families weather temporary periods of unemployment and help avoid dependence on aid.

Case managers work closely with Children Welfare Services social workers when a family has a CWS-linked case. Barriers to self-sufficiency, needs, and goals are discussed alongside the family; those meetings can be in a multi-disciplinary team setting. Plans are coordinated.

The county has a CalWORKs Prevention Services policy that aims to reduce child maltreatment and increase self-sufficiency. Families are screened using a Structured Decision Making (SDM) Risk Assessment tool to screen families who can benefit from a prevention services plan that will help to reduce risks and strengthen the family. SDM outcomes include protection of children from neglect and abuse, permanency and stability in their living situation, families' enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs; adequate, appropriate services to meet the children's educational, physical, and mental health needs; families' increased self-sufficiency, reduced occurrence of welfare-to-work sanctions, and increased earnings.

2) Participation Improvement

Please describe what immediate and long-range actions the county will take to improve the federal work participation rate (WPR) among CalWORKs applicants and recipients. At a minimum, describe how the county will address increased participation in the areas listed below. When responding, provide a detailed description of the policy or strategy in each program area, the anticipated outcome that will result in program improvements, the percentage of families affected, and how success will be determined. Please note that if a county is already using a particular strategy that is successful, a description of that strategy is sufficient.

B. Providing up-front engagement activities

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

Example: A county describes a new policy to engage recipients in orientation and appraisal within one week of application.

1. We will continue to promote the practice of scheduling non-exempt participants into Orientation at the initial face-to-face interview in an effort to inform and motivate participants to engage in activities that will lead to self-sufficiency. Orientation takes place within one week of application date. Participation by applicants in these types of upfront engagement activities is not a condition of aid. Case managers call participants prior to the appointment date; reminders and early engagement have been effective practices that have led to low no-show rates.
2. We will continue to promote and improve the quality of communication with participants -- communication that focuses on goals, strengths, needs, and solutions, rather than strictly on consequences for not participating in work activities. To that end, county staff has been offered training on how to engage participants using a solution-focused model. Engagement is a required topic in induction training for new hires.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly? Example: The County describes how recipients are expected to have welfare-to-work (WTW) plans developed sooner and includes how much sooner, what percentage of the county's WTW caseload will be impacted, etc.

We anticipate that a positive, supportive communication style that begins when we first meet an applicant, coupled with initial actions (i.e. scheduling Orientation) to begin our collaboration, will serve to set the tone for a relationship that will support the family's effort to become more self-sufficient. We expect a consistent countywide application of this strategy on 100% of applicants/participants.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)?

Example: The county describes the percentage by which the earlier engagement policy will increase the county's federal WPR and State participation levels, the percentage by which a reduction in sanctions will increase the county's federal WPR and its State participation levels, etc., by year, over three years (beginning with this year). The county also describes how early engagement will result in better identification of barriers to employment, better identification of exemptions, etc. (including percentages as appropriate). If the county cannot identify the percentage increase to its WPR for an individual policy/strategy because of overlap with another policy/strategy, the WPR impact can be combined with other strategies in Section H below.

We believe that continuing efforts to develop trusting, supportive relationships with participants will help us better assist families. By having frequent, meaningful communication (phone, in office, in their homes, mail) with families, we can:

- Build rapport and trust.

- Assess the participant's engagement level and "meet them there"; each family is unique.
- Identify the participant's goals and explore how these can be met in a welfare-to-work plan.
- Help them identify issues that could prevent them from participating in activities that lead to self-sufficiency.

As a result of the county's cumulative policies and strategies, we expect an overall increase in the county federal WPR of 8% to 10% increase each year. See section H.

C. Achieving full engagement by individuals who are required to participate, and who are partially participating, not participating, or are between activities.

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

Example: The county describes a new policy to work with recipients up front to identify community service areas in which they have specific personal interest (such as volunteering at a local nonprofit) that could be utilized to increase participation in federally allowable activities when recipients are in between activities or need additional hours to meet the 32-/35-hour weekly participation requirement.

1. The county plans to re-invigorate its Job Clubs by teaming up offices so as to provide a greater number of participants to attend. (We are a small county with six offices.) We have found in Job Clubs from years past that when more individuals (as opposed to only one or two) are enrolled in a Job Club, the energy level of a larger group helps participants be more motivated and engaged in finding employment. We will invite volunteer participants to speak and motivate. We plan to revitalize the posting of job leads. In regions of the county where we do not have a one-stop career center, we plan to hold the Job Clubs at the Family Resource Center in order to have a more central and neutral place that does not have the stigma of a welfare office.

2. We have participants who are not quite ready to find sustainable employment because of a lack in work experience, soft skills, and/or are in the early stages of discovering their career interests. We plan to increase the use of Work Experience when appropriate, available through a contract with Shoreline/Goodwill Industries. Shoreline offers skills training, coaching, and job placement. The experience from Shoreline can offer significant benefits to a participant who is just starting out in the workforce.

3. We will also continue to assess job readiness and offer appropriate support, such as soft skills training in which participants are taught workplace norms, communications skills, and time management skills to balance work and family.

4. During the process of conducting job clubs, job search, and placing participants in Work Experience when appropriate, county staff will continue to encourage participants to look for jobs that can allow wage growth over time and that are consistent with their interests and talents, rather than accept the first or just any job offered.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly? Example:

The county describes how the policy benefits recipients and specifies the percent of WTW enrollees who are not participating in activities and the percent who are not fully participating that will become fully engaged in activities that meet federal and State participation requirements (separated by meeting federal and State requirements).

The related strategies as described above will help motivate participants to find employment that is interesting to them and which they can see as meaningful to their family's well being. We anticipate an increase of 20% among those WTW enrollees who are not currently participating, and a participation increase of 10% among those currently not fully participating in activities.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)?

Example: The county describes the percent by which the county's federal WPR and State participation level will be increased by full engagement of partially participating recipients and non-participating recipients. The county describes the percent increase for each group of recipients, separately, by year, over three years (beginning with this year). If the county cannot identify the percentage increase to its WPR for an individual policy/strategy because of overlap with another policy/strategy, the WPR impact can be combined with other strategies in Section H below.

See section H.

D. Providing activities to encourage participation and to prevent families from going into sanction status

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

Example: A county describes a new strategy that after an instance of noncompliance, individuals will meet with a worker who specializes in identifying and resolving barriers to nonparticipation (substance abuse, child care problems, etc.) and will work with individuals to develop strategies to maintain participation.

1. The county will continue to promote and implement its policy of conducting a pre-scheduled home visit prior to imposing any welfare-to-work sanction. In addition to the home visit, the policy requires that the supervisor review the case for completeness and ensure WTW activities are specific, measurable, attainable, and realistic.
2. The county has Employment/Resource Specialists IVs who work closely with case managers to help coach, facilitate, and ensure progress of the WTW plan. ERS IVs assist with more intense case management when necessary, to prevent sanctions. Frequent communication with participants can help us ensure that activities have been assigned appropriately; otherwise, participants may end up unable to comply.
3. We will continue to improve screening and assessment of barriers to self-sufficiency. Barriers such as mental health issues and/or drug/alcohol abuse can be left unidentified or not addressed, particularly when a participant does not recognize them as issues or barriers. The county will continue use of the Structured Decision Making (SDM) Risk Assessment tool at application in an effort to identify barriers early on. When barriers exist, we will refer to the tool as the source indicating such barriers; by referring to an evidence-based tool, we may be able to reduce resistance that a participant may have toward exploring this subject and developing a course of action to address it.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly? Example:

The County describes how recipients will benefit from the new policy and identifies the percentage by which the county's sanction rate will be reduced.

The policies/strategies described above focus on case management, compliance, and reduction of obstacles to participation, all of which require a strong commitment by county staff and participants to invest time and energy in order to move forward to achieve participants' self-sufficiency. We anticipate that these policies/strategies will help reduce sanctions by 20%.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)?

Example: The County describes the percent by which sanction prevention will increase the county's federal WPR and State participation levels, by year, over three years (beginning with this year). The county also describes how it will measure the benefits to recipients in terms of barrier removal services. If the county cannot identify the percentage increase to its WPR for an individual policy/strategy because of overlap with another policy/strategy, the WPR impact can be combined with other strategies in Section H below.

See section H.

E. Reengaging noncompliant or sanctioned individuals

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

Example: A county describes a home visiting program that focuses on re-engaging sanctioned recipients in WTW and removing barriers to participation.

1. Elimination of durational sanctions has been a significant help in quickly reengaging sanctioned individuals who may otherwise find small ways to acclimate to their reduced grants. The county's ongoing strategy is to maintain regular communication (phone call, letter, home visit) with families in an effort to assess whether new or previously unidentified barriers exist that need to be addressed.
2. Co-case management by Employment/Resource Specialists (ERS) and the more specialized ERS IVs is another ongoing strategy the county uses to assist families. Additionally, when a family also has a case open with CWS, a social worker can assist in helping the family address barriers and contribute to a plan of action. When appropriate, multi-disciplinary teams are involved.
3. Through regular, constructive communication with families, county staff will continue its efforts to motivate participants during any stages of their plan, including, and especially, when any participant expresses frustration, fear, complacency, or resignation. We believe that case managers are among the most important resources the county has in assisting families' efforts to attain self-sufficiency. As such, the relationships case managers develop with families are key. The county will continually help families by offering appropriate services and opportunities to comply. Helping families increase their hopes in the future is fundamental in the efforts to make progress with WTW plans.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly? Example:

The County describes the percentage by which its sanction rate will be reduced, the percentage of sanctioned individuals that may be identified as meeting a WTW exemption, etc. The county also describes how identification of barriers and the provision of services will assist the family in meeting WTW requirements and achieving self-sufficiency.

As described above, identification of barriers and the provision of appropriate services and resources, discussed within the context of a collaborative relationship between family and case manager, will help us make progress.

We anticipate reducing sanction rates by 20% or more.

We anticipate that 5% of sanctioned individuals will be found to be exempt.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)?

Example: The County describes the percentage by which a reduction in its sanction rate will increase the county's federal WPR and its State work participation levels, by year, over three years (beginning with this year), and how the county will measure the benefits to recipients in terms of barrier removal services. If the county cannot identify the percentage increase to its WPR for an individual policy/strategy because of overlap with another policy/strategy, the WPR impact can be combined with other strategies in Section H below.

See section H.

F. Other activities designed to increase the county's federal WPR?

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy):

County case managers are key partners in families' efforts to achieve self-sufficiency. The relationships case managers develop with participants are foundations that facilitate discussions of goals, needs, concerns, fears, barriers, resources, and short- and long-term action plans. When families face challenges, case managers need to be available to assist them with services and resources while helping families to keep looking forward. The county will continually strive to have adequate staff levels and support and train staff in needed areas – such as how to engage; how to motivate; how to implement new policies/procedures; and how to use our welfare data system (CalWIN). The county is exploring ways to improve consistent implementation of policies and procedures across all offices in the county – such as a checklist that guides supervisors on ways to track and support case managers' compliance with welfare-to-work tasks – regular communication with families, appropriate documentation and management of cases, home visits prior to imposing possible sanctions, etc. Ultimately, county efforts are subject to the availability of sufficient funds to support the CalWORKs program.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly?

We expect that the county efforts described above affect 100% of families.

How will success be determined (quantitative or qualitative assessment of effects)?

As we continue to work with families, including those who are new to the program and those who have been on for a long while and are "harder-to-serve" we hope to reduce frustrations and increase hope and opportunity. This can be done with the development and nurture of collaborative relationships with families and community partners as we implement policies and strategies.

G. Please provide a description of how the county will collaborate with local agencies, including, but not limited to, local workforce investment boards, community colleges, universities, adult schools and regional occupational centers/programs that provide activities that meet federal work participation requirements and provide participants with skills that will help them achieve long-term self-sufficiency. For each individual agency, responses should include elements such as how information is shared or will be shared, ongoing or planned contracts, ongoing meetings established, etc.

Description of policy(ies) or strategy(ies) that will result in program improvement (identify whether this is a new policy/strategy, a current policy/strategy that will continue to be promoted, or an expansion of, or revision to, current policy/strategy).

Example: The County describes how it will collaborate with local community colleges to expand the availability of short-term vocational educational programs and increase the number of work-study placements for recipients.

The county and Cuesta Community College Workforce Development Project/CalWORKs have a contract pertaining to the work study program to give CalWORKs participants the opportunity to gain work experience while attending Cuesta. Students are placed in on- or off-campus sites with a goal to work 20 hrs/week while attending school full time. Each placement is structured to provide guidance and support to a student who is transitioning into the workforce while also demanding responsibility and accountability from him/her. Students are encouraged to complete at least one semester of the

Cooperative Work Experience class, or its equivalent, which highlights employment related issues including job readiness and retention, conflict resolution and management and workplace etiquette.

We also have a contract with Cuesta College pertaining to community-based English as a Second Language (CBESL) that serves CalWORKs participants and other low-income residents of the county who have limited English language skills. The primary goal of the CBESL is to provide English language and employee skills training that leads directly to opportunities for steady, gainful employment, career advancement, and to allow greater access to community services and resources that promote family financial self-sufficiency.

We have a memorandum of understanding with Cuesta that establishes the procedure to provide supportive services (books, transportation, child care, and other related school expenses) to students receiving CalWORKs/TANF assistance.

We are reviewing the current MOU and contracts. Discussions include:

- How to better use our monthly meetings attended by staff from the Cuesta CalWORKs office and case manager representatives from each county social services office. We will continue this frequency but plan to invest more time discussing the status of mutual participants' compliance with activities, assessing whether their activities continue to meet work participation rates and individuals' WTW goals, and discussing how Cuesta can further help case managers and the families in meeting participation hours.
- How we can measure outcomes: tracking the percentage of students who are placed in sustainable, long-term jobs; tracking the percentage of students who are fully participating.
- Developing a more comprehensive plan with Cuesta that assists families with job placement following the completion of curriculums.
- Working closely with Cuesta and increasing awareness of opportunities such as Cuesta's "Career Connections," which offers a centralized location for job search and application assistance; college readiness and vocational assessment classes; and vocational training courses.

The county refers participants to Cuesta College, which provides industry specific English as a Second Language classes to CalWORKs participants and other low-income residents of the county who have limited English language skills. The primary goal of the community-based ESL program is to provide English language and employee skills training that leads directly to opportunities for steady, gainful employment, for career advancement, and to promote greater access to community services and resources that promote family self-sufficiency. We have been discussing with Cuesta College the possibility of offering GED preparation classes.

We collaborate with the adult school of the San Luis Coastal Unified and Lucia Mar Unified School Districts for Adult Basic Education courses. Classes are also available at Hancock Community College.

The county has the Santa Lucia Regional Occupation Program (ROP) embedded in nine county high schools, serving 2,500 students. It does not serve adults and therefore collaboration with ROP is limited to serving our youth.

The county has a contract with Shoreline/Goodwill Industries to provide unpaid work experience (WEX) to participants who are not able to and/or are not quite ready to keep a long-term job. Through our ongoing collaboration with Shoreline, we will increase our awareness and use of this activity. Shoreline offers participants an assessment of strengths and barriers to employment, works with case managers to develop an employability plan, offers series of workshops (concurrently during WEX) designed to prepare participants for work, advancement, develop a positive work ethic, learn communication skills, practice effective time management, set work and life goals, learn about personal strengths and ways to achieve success, how to motivate oneself, how to problem solve, and

learn skills to prepare a family unit for a job including how to resolve home management and parenting issues.

Shoreline staff recently met with our local welfare-to-work workgroup to discuss their services and how we can serve participants better. They will be visiting our office sites to meet with case managers and collaborate on individual participant's cases as needed.

The county has two One Stop Career Centers that are operated by a local consortium designated by the Workforce Investment Board of San Luis Obispo County, to meet the needs of job seekers, employers, and the community. Case managers are co-located at the One Stops with other agencies with the goal of facilitating integrated employment, training, education, and economic development for our CalWORKs participants, job seekers, workers, and employers.

A new resource is now available in the county for our participants who have a case open with Mental Health Services or Department of Rehabilitation. The Transitions-Mental Health Association runs the Supported Employment Program, funded by The Mental Health Services Act. The county is currently exploring the use of this resource to place participants who have a diagnosis from Mental Health, into long-term employment with ongoing support services.

What are the anticipated effects and percentage of families affected monthly? Example:

The county describes how recipients will benefit through increased availability of vocational education and work study programs in terms of obtaining skills needed to obtain employment that will lead to self-sufficiency, increasing recipients' income while on aid, increasing the percentage of recipients participating in federally allowable activities, etc.

In accordance with AB 1808, our county plan addendum details strategies for increasing work participation while also promoting the goals of the CalWORKs program. Through our increased collaboration with community partners and our continual effort to develop supportive, cooperative relationships with participants, we anticipate that we will have higher quality WTW plans that include state/federal work activities that address barriers early on and meet participants' interests and talents. Activities include those offered by Cuesta Community College, Adult Education, Shoreline, Transitions, and in particular the services through One Stops – job readiness support, work study, skill building, and job placement. We anticipate that by focusing on relationships, developing realistic, customized plans, and providing intense case management for those with multiple barriers, we will increase by 20% the number of participants who can attain long term self-sufficiency.

How will success be determined (quantitative and qualitative assessment of effects)?

Example: The County describes the percentage by which the county's federal WPR and its State participation levels will increase by year over three years (beginning with this year). The county also describes the amount by which a recipient's annual earnings are expected to increase, the number of families that will leave aid due to employment annually, etc. If the county cannot identify the percentage increase to its WPR for an individual policy/strategy because of overlap with another policy/strategy, the WPR impact can be combined with other strategies in Section H below.

See section H.

3) Plan to measure quarterly progress

Please describe how the county will measure the extent to which cumulative policies or strategies in the Plan addendum are successful, and how the county will measure progress on a quarterly basis (for example, participation rate of a specific population, sanction rate, orientation show rate, etc.). In addition, include the projected cumulative impact the county's policies or strategies will likely have on the county's federal work participation rate for each year of the next three years (for example, current rate of X will be increased to Y).

H. Plan to measure quarterly progress:

We will use reports from the following sources to measure quarterly progress with meeting the federal participation rate, sanction rates, orientation show rate, job placement rate, and length of time off aid:

- Reports from CalWIN system;
- Data reports from community partners who help serve our participants;
- Case managers' experience and their identification of trends that we need to address, and also their findings/experience with participants receiving post aid services and support.

Individuals who are exempt by state regulations will not be required by the county to participate in federal work activities.

Projected impact on county's federal WPR:

Our WPR has been an average of 24%. We anticipate that our cumulative policies and strategies will result in at least an 8% increase each year over the next three years.

4) Funding

Describe how the county has spent and plans to utilize single allocation and other funding for the county's CalWORKs program. This section will help explain to county and State stakeholders how increased funding will be used.

Having adequate level of staff to deliver our services and evaluating contracts for services to increase work activities are significant.

Mileage reimbursement to CalWORKs participants will be increased from 13 cents to 17 cents per mile for miles driven beginning January 1st, 2007. This rate is presently used in the county system to reimburse jurors.

Ultimately, the county's efforts are subject to the availability of sufficient funds to support the CalWORKs program.

Program Component	Fiscal Year 2005-06 Actual Expenditures	Fiscal Year 2006-07 Budgeted Amount	Description of how additional funding provided in Fiscal Year 2006-07 will be used
CalWORKs Eligibility Administration	6,668,079	7,174,502	Fill staff vacancies
WTW Employment Services	2,361,542	2,500,000	Fill staff vacancies
CalWORKs Child Care	1,536,627	1,489,965	
Cal-Learn	69,887	70,000	
CalWORKs Funded Mental Health Services	273,160	273,160	
CalWORKs Funded Substance Abuse Services	236,190	236,190	